

VZCZCXRO4127
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3121 3351449
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 011449Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5601
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BAGHDAD 003121

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NOMINATION FOR 2010 SECRETARY'S WOMEN OF COURAGE
AWARD

REF: STATE 111471

¶1. (SBU) Per Reftel, Embassy Baghdad is pleased to submit its nominee for the Secretary's 2010 Award for International Women of Courage, keyed to the priorities in the reference. The nominee has been informed of the Ambassador's intention to nominate her and is available to travel in March 2010.

¶2. (SBU) Nominee: Iman Kadhim Abood Al-Bawi
Date of Birth: August 16, 1967
Country of Birth: Iraq
Citizenship: Iraqi
Job Title/Association: Senior Program Manager, CHF International
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¶3. (SBU) Iman Abood is a Senior Program Manager with CHF International, a development and humanitarian organization involved in health, governance, infrastructure, economic development and housing projects in Iraq. Many of the programs support women's political, economic and social advancement. In 2007, CHF was looking for volunteers to establish a variety of USAID Community Action Programs (CAP) in war-torn Anbar Province. At the time, Anbar had only recently emerged from three years of incessant combat between Coalition Forces and a determined Sunni insurgency, lead by Al-Qaida. No one wanted to take the job, except Iman.

¶4. (SBU) As a liberal Shi'a woman, Iman was a very unlikely candidate to spearhead community-based programs in an almost-exclusively Sunni province dominated by conservative Bedouin tribes. In some areas of Anbar, women are still persecuted for attempting to hold positions in government and are beaten for working with NGOs. Iman has personally faced mortal danger on more than one occasion, having recently survived a car bombing in Ramadi, and yet she has not only persevered, but has excelled in her job.

¶5. (SBU) Anbar Province contains a disproportionate amount of war widows, having experienced the brunt of combat during the insurgency years. As a prime implementer for the Marla Ruzicka Fund, Iman has supported more than 2,000 individual and community projects that directly benefit these widows. The fund provides them with vocational training and equipment, in addition to micro-loans for the establishment of small businesses. By giving these women the tools to become active participants in the local economy, the Marla Ruzicka Fund has advanced the cause of women's rights in Anbar Province and prompted a re-evaluation of their role in this conservative society.

¶6. (SBU) In addition, Iman has managed and executed CAPIII projects such as school renovations, literacy programs, neighborhood cleanups, water and sewage rehabilitation, and small infrastructure repairs in the cities of Falluja, Ramadi, Hit, Haditha, Anah, Rutbah and Al-Qa'im. Between the Marla Ruzicka Fund and the CAPIII program, Iman has managed over \$4,000,000 in USAID grants since 2007.

¶7. (SBU) It is important to note, as well, that Iman developed and implemented these programs from scratch. When she arrived in Anbar, CHF had no presence in the province. Since taking the position in 2007, she has established offices in some of the most conservative and dangerous cities in Iraq, such as Rutbah, Rawah and Al-Qa'im. She traveled to Anbar by herself, recruited and trained her staff, and pitched CAP programs to local mayors, city council members, directors general and tribal sheikhs. She has succeeded in implementing these programs through sheer determination and force of will.

¶8. (SBU) Iman's efforts have been a fundamental component of the USG's reconstruction and capacity-building mission in Anbar Province, and have produced tangible results that have improved the lives of the Anbari people. Qimproved the lives of the Anbari people.

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